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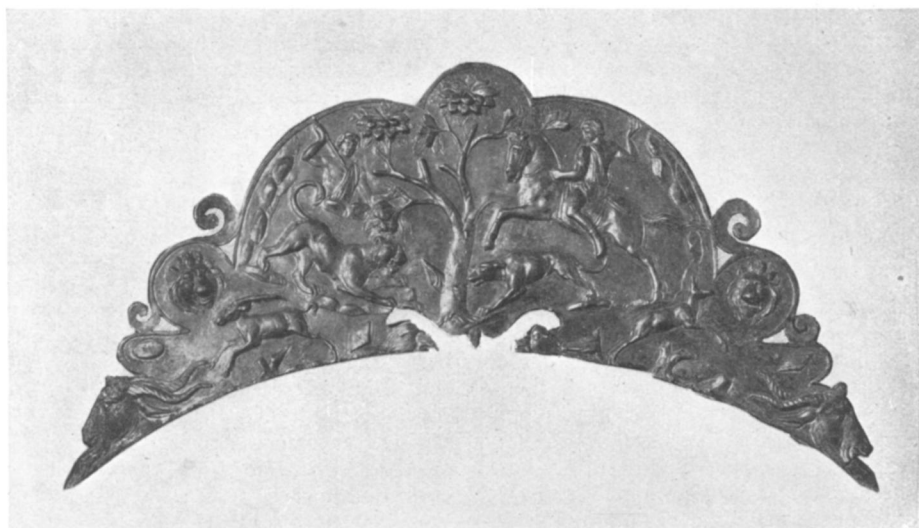


FIG. 5. ROMAN SILVER HANDLE

NEW GREEK AND ROMAN ACQUISITIONS

III. GEMS AND OBJECTS IN PRECIOUS METALS

OF the acquisitions in the Department of Classical Art during the year 1906 the objects in precious metals and the gems still remain to be described. The following is a complete list prepared for those specially interested in ancient jewelry. The objects are arranged chronologically, not in order of importance. They are all exhibited in the long, central case of the "Gold Room," in the various compartments to which they severally belong.

1. "Mycenaean" gem, with intaglio design, of onyx, lenticular in shape and

perforated for stringing. Subject, two bulls lying down, crocus in corner. This is a characteristic example of the gem-cutting of the flourishing period of "Mycenaean" art (circa 1600-1400 B. C.). Greatest diameter $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (2.2 cm.).

2. A pair of spirals of pale gold or electron (a natural alloy of gold and silver), fig. 1. The purpose of these spirals is uncertain; they are too large to have been worn in the hair and too small for bracelets, unless for a very young child, the interior diameter being only a little over one and a half inch (4 cm.). It is possible that they formed pendants to earrings. From the illustration it will be seen that the shape is curious and unusual, for instead of being a simple coil from end to end, each is bent back sharply upon itself in the middle, a fact which materially diminishes their elasticity. The origin of these spirals is also difficult to determine, on account of the strong resemblance between certain classes of Phoenician and Ionic Greek gold work in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C., the period to which they belong. The two ends of each are elaborately decorated with balls, which are covered with a very fine granular pattern, with human heads



FIG. 1. ELECTRON SPIRAL

between them. Both the types of the faces and the character of the head-dress are distinctly Semitic, and probably, therefore, the objects may be regarded as Phoenician, even though the granular work is unusually fine for Phoenician workmanship.



FIG. 2. GREEK GOLD RING

3. Pendant of an earring. Ionic Greek of the archaic period. The shape is like that figured in Salzmann, *Nécropole de Camirus*, pl. I, in the form of a double hook, each end terminating in a horizontal disk which is ornamented. Electron. Height 2 in. (5 cm.).

4. Greek gold ring (fig. 2). The bezel is engraved with the figure of a girl in a dancing posture, her drapery thrown over a chair in the background. The execution is of exceptional beauty. From the resemblance which this figure bears to a gem published by Furtwängler, *Antike Gemmen*, III, p. 134, which is said to have been found in a sarcophagus of the fourth century, it might be argued that this is the period to which our ring should be assigned. But the proportions and type of the figure are more decisive criteria, and these are distinctly characteristic of the fifth century B. C., and of a relatively early part of that century, as is shown by comparison with such figures as those on the Ludovisi Throne, the statue of a Niobid recently discovered in Rome, and the figure of Cassandra on the Vivenzio vase in Naples. The statue which our figure most closely resembles in type and form is the so-called Esquiline Venus, which is gradually being recognized as the reproduction of a type which dates from the middle of the fifth century B. C. The date that we should assign to this ring is therefore not later than the second half of the fifth century B. C.

Greatest diameter of the bezel, $\frac{13}{16}$ in. (2 cm.).

5. Greek gold ring. The bezel is engraved with a group representing Aphrodite and Eros, of a type familiar in works of this class. Aphrodite, fully draped, is seated upon a chair facing to the left, with one hand about the neck of Eros, who stands in front of her. In the field, above the Eros, is a dove. Execution good. Fourth century B. C. Greatest diameter of the bezel, $\frac{13}{16}$ in. (1.8 cm.).

6. Greek gold ring with a large round bezel, in the centre of which is engraved a fully draped woman standing by an incense-burner (*thymiaterion*), into which she is scattering incense. Sketchy execution. Fourth century B. C. Diameter of bezel $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (2.2 cm.).

7. Gold ornament of pediment shape, surmounted by an akroterion and ending at the two corners in the foreparts of winged horses (fig. 6). The latter are modelled in full round, and are resting upon triangular Ionic capitals (one of which is missing). It is flat, of thin gold and made in two pieces, front and back, of which the former is decorated with a beautiful and elaborate design in filigree thread. The object itself is evidently the back of a fibula, as on the reverse side are the remains of a spring and clasp. Fourth century B. C. Length $3\frac{1}{16}$ in. (7.8 cm.).

8. Pair of massive Greek silver bracelets, terminating in lions' heads. Type like *Antiquités du Bosphore Cimmérien*, Reinach's edition, p. 138, except that instead of being of solid the hoops con-

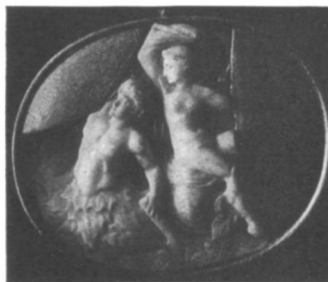


FIG. 3. HELLENISTIC CAMEO

sist of coils of silver wire. The collar is ornamented with a palmette pattern in filigree thread. Latter part of fifth century B. C. Outside diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (8.9 cm.).

9. Greek silver bracelet of simple hoop-shape, with twisted ends on the inside, which merge into serpents extending around the greater part of the circumference. The front is decorated with a filigree pattern of palmettes and scrolls with a small gold boss in the centre. Fourth or third century B. C. Outer diameter 3 in. (7.6 cm.).



FIG. 4. CHALCEDONY FIGURE OF NIKE

10. Greek silver ring, companion to the above, but decorated simply with a gold boss.

11. Fragment of a cameo representing a Nereid riding upon a Triton (fig. 3). This is an exceptionally beautiful piece of cameo-cutting, both figures being modelled with great skill and with a sensitive appreciation of muscular details. In this respect, as well as in type, the Triton bears a strong resemblance to certain figures in the reliefs from the Great Altar at Pergamon. For this reason, and for

the beauty of the execution the gem may be safely described as Greek rather than Roman, and as a work of the Hellenistic period. Height of fragment $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. (2.7 cm.).

12. Figure of a flying Nike, of chalcedony (fig. 4); the head, arms and wings were of separate pieces, attached, and are missing. This is an exquisite example of free-hand cutting in hard material. The artist has taken advantage of the opaque quality of chalcedony by making the parts of the drapery which are clear of the figure much thinner than the body, so that when held against the light the figure itself is clearly and solidly silhouetted and the flying drapery rendered translucent. Late Greek or Roman. Height $2\frac{7}{8}$ in. (7.2 cm.).

13. Large silver handle, Roman, of the early Empire, probably first century A. D. (fig. 5). This is a massive piece of silver, measuring $14\frac{3}{8}$ inches (36.5 cm.) in a straight line from tip to tip, 5 inches (12.7 cm.) wide across the middle, and $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (5 mm.) thick, cast solid and weighing 3 lbs. 10 oz. 5 dwt. (1438.536 grammes). It is perfectly flat, and was evidently attached horizontally to a bowl or dish, the diameter of which, as indicated by the curve of the handle, must have been about $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches (57.1 cm.). The upper surface is beautifully decorated in relief, which is part of the casting, not repoussé work, and was finished by chasing, with which the outlines and details are accentuated, the decorative effect of the whole being heightened by a liberal application of gilding to various parts of the figures and other objects represented. This gilding is in the form of very thin gold-leaf, which Mr. Buck, our Curator of Metal work, has ascertained to have been applied by simple rubbing or burnishing, without the use of any chemical or glutinous substance. The principal subject of the reliefs is a hunting-scene, which need not be described in detail, as it has no special mythological or historical significance, and is adequately shown in the illustration. Attention may be called, however, to the ingenious manner in which the two goats' heads

are made to play their part as the terminals of the design, and to the introduction of the lion's heads to give accent to the scrolls at the sides. This exceptionally elaborate and important example of Roman silver work gives us some conception of the luxury of table-ware in the early years of the empire.*

*A dish with a pair of handles of similar character, found at Bizerta, in Tunis, is published by P. Gauckler, in the *Monuments Piot*, II, p. 77, pls. VIII, IX. Other important examples are the patera of Bavay, *Gazette archeologique*, 1884, p. 346, and that of Montélimar, in the Louvre. See also Th. Schreiber, *Die alexandrinische Toreutik*, Leipzig, 1894, especially pp. 329-338.

14. Fragment of a large Roman cameo, of onyx, with parts of three figures in a chariot,—a bearded man, a draped female and the right forearm with part of the body of a third figure. Length of fragment $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches (8 cm.). Thickness, $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (1.4 cm.).

15. Roman cameo, of sardonyx, representing Dionysos and Ariadne in a chariot drawn by panthers. A small Eros stands on the back of one of the panthers, guiding the reins. Length $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. (2.9 cm.), height $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. (2.9 cm.).

E. R.

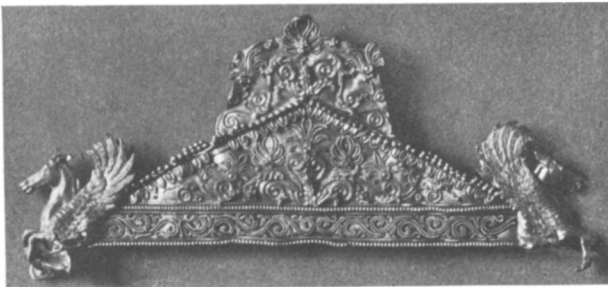


FIG. 6. GREEK GOLD ORNAMENT